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MARINE CORPS CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS SCHOOL
WEAPONS TRAINING BATTALION
TRAINING COMMAND
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STUDENT OUTLINE

CMO SUPPORT TO COA WARGAME

CAC-PLAN-211

CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS PLANNER COURSE

M020AQD

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

a. **Terminal Learning Objective**. Given a mission, commander's intent, CPB planning support products and as a member of a Civil-Military Operations Working Group, integrate Civil-Military considerations into the planning process, to support the commander's decision making by providing an understanding of the civil environment and the nature of the problem in order to identify an appropriate solution, in accordance with MCWP 3-33.1. (CAC-PLAN-2001)

b. **Enabling Learning Objectives**

(1) Without the aid of references, define the purpose of the COA War Game step, in accordance with the MCWP 5-1, Ch 4. (CAC-PLAN-2001r)

(2) Without the aid of references, identify COA War Game injects, in accordance with the MCWP 5-1, Ch 4. (CAC-PLAN-2001s)

(3) Without the aid of references, identify COA War Game activities, in accordance with the MCWP 5-1, Ch 4. (CAC-PLAN-2001t)

(4) Without the aid of references, identify COA War Game results, in accordance with the MCWP 5-1, Ch 4. (CAC-PLAN-2001u)

1. INTRODUCTION OF COA WARGAME

a. Course of Action (COA) Wargame. The purpose of the COA Wargame step is to improve the plan. Whether the wargame is conducted formally as a disciplined, interactive process or informally through a simple "what if" conversation between the Commander and staff, wargaming relies heavily on the operational judgment and experience of the participants.

(1) It examines and refines the option(s) in light of adversary capabilities and potential actions/reactions as well as other factors peculiar to the operational environment, such as the local population and how it may respond to friendly and adversary interactions.

(2) COA Wargame allows the staff and subordinate commanders to gain a common understanding of friendly and possible adversary COAs. This common understanding allows them to determine the advantages and disadvantages of each COA and forms the basis for the commander's COA Comparison and Decision. As a CMO planner, you will be required to participate in wargaming to determine which CMO-related option(s) best accomplish the mission and satisfy the Commander's Intent.

b. Wargaming

(1) Wargaming is a simulation, by whatever means, of a military operation involving two or more opposing forces, using rules, data, and procedures designed to depict an actual or assumed real-life situation (JP 1-02).

(2) Why conduct a Wargame?

(a) To evaluate (strengths/weaknesses of each COA)

(b) To validate (test COAs against thinking adversary)

(c) To understand (prepare to adapt in execution)

c. Wargame Considerations. The COA Wargame leads to a greater understanding of the environment and the nature of the problem, the sequence and timing of major events, and recognition of required modifications to each COA.

(1) Therefore, planners should consider the following:

- (a) Adversary Actions
- (b) Environment and "Murphy" (the unexpected)
- (c) Civil Actions
- (2) The Wargame helps planners refine and validate:
 - (a) Timing and triggers
 - (b) Integration of all MAGTF capabilities
 - (c) Supporting task organization and supporting relationships
 - (d) MAGTF resources, facilities and locations
 - (e) Staff Estimate and Estimates of Supportability
- (3) The CMO Working Group should have the following resources at their disposal when attending the command Wargame:
 - (a) CMO Estimate and Associated Planning Tools
 - (b) CPB
 - (c) Green Cell Input
 - (d) Updated Supporting Concept, Sync Matrix, and Graphic and Narrative

d. **Wargame Rules.** These guidelines may be useful to keep the wargame flowing and free from unintentional interruptions.

- (1) Wargame each COA independently
- (2) Stay on timeline
- (3) Use approved COAs
- (4) Remain objective and unbiased
- (5) Record wargame results by "turn"
- (6) Collect COA refinement recommendations

e. **Wargame Injects.** At the end of COA Development the commander will incorporate his most important concerns into his wargame guidance and tell you which COAs are to be wargamed against what adversary COAs [most likely (ML)/most dangerous (MD)/most advantageous (MA)]. The OPT oftentimes assists the commander by providing draft guidance and evaluation criteria. The commander's evaluation criteria is the lens that is used to analyze and evaluate COAs (determines FASDC). The commander will have specific issues that need to be addressed and/or questions that must be answered during the wargaming of each selected COA. While the commander may have "standing evaluation criteria" (such as limiting friendly casualties or flexibility in the plan) other criteria may be added specific to the situation.

2. **COA WARGAME PREPARATION**

a. **Wargame Preparation.** Preparation is critical it facilitates the flow and timeliness of the wargame. Many of the following events occur simultaneously:

(1) Determine Wargame Organization

(2) Gather the tools

(a) Wargame Injects

(b) Planning Support Tools

1. Synchronization Matrix (warfighting functions or LOO construct)

2. Wargame Worksheet (used to organize and record friendly, adversary, and civil actions)

3. Decision Support Template / Matrix (depicts decision points and time phase lines associated with movement of adversary and friendly forces)

(3) Select a Wargame method

b. **Organization of the Wargame.** The OPT should be properly organized and technically skilled to conduct the wargame. Key personnel include:

(1) Facilitator: Usually the OPT lead, helps keep the wargame process moving and on track, settles disputes, and directs the actions of the group.

(2) Arbiter: He should either choose from within the OPT, or arrange for someone on the staff to arbitrate should a dispute arise during the play of the game. Sometimes the Chief of Staff or Executive Officer will fill the role of Arbiter.

(3) Recorder: The Recorder should keep track of all moves and results from game play and record the strengths and weakness of each COA. I highly recommend that each OPT member take copious notes as well. The records you keep will give you and the orders writing staff a record from which to produce the templates and matrices necessary to analyze COAs and achieve a decision. The recorder should utilize the planning support tools as outlined in the MCWP 5-1, Appendix F.

(4) Red Cell/Green Cell/Cultural Subject Matter Experts (SMEs): They orchestrate adversary and local population reaction to friendly moves using doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures of their ML or most disadvantageous COAs. The CMO planner may be intimately involved in Green Cell products and should be coordinating with Green Cell personnel to ensure shared understanding of the civil environment.

(5) Information Manager: You will need quick access to stored information, especially if crunch for time. Information management will be your greatest challenge and the biggest time-killer if not organized properly. Utilize force web sites and keep it up to date so the MSCs can tap your current plan.

(6) Command and Control Personal Computer (C2PC) Operator: Someone from the staff who is very proficient at C2PC to build and modify your templates during the wargame.

(7) Staff Participants: The OPT Leader needs to ensure that the staff representatives are present for the wargame and are developing their estimates as the game progresses.

(8) Subject Matter Experts: Don't short change planning by omitting SMEs. If you don't have a core competency on the staff, request one from another command. SMEs can be full or part-time in the OPT. Examples include NBC, SJA, IO, and FAOs

All of the warfighting functions must be represented by the participants in the OPT. Make sure all six are covered by competent people.

c. **Planning Support Tools.** One of the most important things you'll do is record your wargame. Planning support tools help the commander and staff record, track, and analyze critical planning information. These tools facilitate a better understanding of the environment, the commander's decision-making, and assist in the preparation of plans and orders:

(1) **Synchronization Matrix.** This product is used to synchronize the COA across time, space, and purpose in relation to an adversary COA. The CMO Planner/CA Marine will ensure that CMO input is folded into the synch matrix. Depending on the type used, CMO may have its own functional row in the synchronization matrix, with the row used to record CMO activities throughout the COA.

(2) **Wargame Worksheet.** This worksheet is used during the Wargame to record the friendly action, adversary reaction, and friendly counter-action of each COA. It is also used to capture critical information identified during the wargame, such as potential CCIRs, decision points, and Named Areas of Interest. It is important to consider the commander's evaluation criteria and annotate as necessary in the remarks section.

(3) **Decision Support Template/Matrix.** The decision support template illustrates decision points, areas of interests associated with events or movement of adversary and friendly forces, the flow of the operation, and other information required to enhance the understanding of the friendly COA.

d. **Wargame Methods.** There are four wargaming methods. Each technique is suited for a particular situation considering the time and resources available and command priority. The MCWP 5-1 lists these four Wargame Methods:

(1) **Sequence of Critical Tasks.** The Sequence of Critical Tasks method will analyze the critical tasks associated with mission accomplishment in accordance with the concept of support. During COA Wargame, the OPT examines the level of effort required to accomplish critical tasks and if the critical tasks are listed in the correct sequence; re-sequencing critical tasks maybe necessary.

(2) Avenue in Depth. The Avenue in Depth method focuses on one avenue of approach at a time, beginning with the main effort. This method is good for offensive COAs or for defensive situations when canalizing terrain inhibits mutual support.

(3) Belt. The Belt method emphasizes synchronization of simultaneous events. It divides the terrain into belts running the width of the area of operations. The belt technique is most effective when the terrain is divided into well-defined cross-compartments; during phased operations; or when the adversary deployed in clearly defined echelons or belts.

(4) Box. The Box method focuses on critical events within specific geographic boundaries. It is most useful when time is limited and used to analyze critical events and decision points in a specified area, such as engagement areas or a landing zone.

e. Red Cell Brief. The Red Cell ensures assessed threat capabilities and vulnerabilities are realistically evaluated against each friendly COA. The Red Cell will brief the adversary most likely and most dangerous COAs and present doctrine based on adversary reactions to friendly actions.

f. Green Cell Brief. The Green Cell plays the role of a thinking and independent civil populace during wargaming. It uses historical and operational experience to react to friendly actions as well as the actions of the adversary in order to test friendly COA(s) during wargaming. The Green Cell ensures civil capabilities and vulnerabilities are realistically evaluated against each friendly COA. A Green Cell member should be present throughout the wargame, but make a distinction between the Green Cell and the CMO OPT representative. The Green Cell will brief the civil most likely and most disadvantageous COA with a focus on key influences. These COAs should include:

- (1) Government reactions
- (2) HN security forces reactions
- (3) HN civil leadership reactions
- (4) Interorganizational reactions
- (5) Cultural and civil relationships in the battlespace

g. CMO Working Group Wargame. The CMO working group should conduct its Wargame (wargame rehearsal) prior to the OPT's

Wargame. Therefore, the working group has the opportunity to identify gaps in the CMO supporting concept prior to these issues being highlighted at the OPT Wargame. Additionally, the internal Wargame may highlight friendly COA shortcomings that need to be addressed prior to the OPT Wargame. The CMO Working Group concentrates on the following questions:

(1) Does the COA achieve the intended purpose of the operation?

(2) What additional forces (resources) are necessary to achieve the purpose if the original actions fall short?

(3) Does the COA solve the problem statement?

(4) Does the COA accomplish the mission?

3. **COA WARGAME EXECUTION**

a. **Wargame Turn.** A sequence of moves; a friendly force action, adversary/civil reactions, and a friendly force counteraction as a result of any unanticipated adversary/civil actions that would require the friendly force to change its COA or prepare a branch plan. The model used to examine each COA is referred to as a turn, it:

(1) Covers all friendly, adversary, and civil actions that are planned to occur during a specific time interval.

(2) Focuses on specific task(s) or events.

(3) Usually consists of three moves.

(a) One Friendly (Action)

(b) One Adversary (Reaction)

(c) One Friendly (Counteraction)

(4) Preparation and first "turn" usually take twice as long as subsequent game "turns".

b. **Details of a Turn**

(1) Action:

(a) Describe MAGTF actions for the essential task.

(b) Describe Supporting Concept actions - Describe any CMO actions to include host nation, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and the desired outcome.

(2) Reaction:

(a) Describe operations of all adversary forces within the AO based on ML/MD COA.

(b) Determine civil reaction based Green Cell ML/MD analysis.

(c) Identify potential decision points, Branches, and Sequels.

(3) Counteraction. Determine the unit's and Supporting Concepts counter-action.

(4) Scrub each turn:

(a) Against the Evaluation Criteria.

(b) Against the Problem Statement.

(c) Against the Mission Statement.

c. **Recording Results.** The result of the wargame informs COA Comparison and Decision. Recording helps to:

(1) Synchronize Warfighting functions/Supporting Concepts.

(2) Refine the Decision Support Template.

(3) Refine Task Organization/Command Relationships.

(4) Validate or refine CCIRs.

(5) Inform/Refine CMO Staff Estimate for COA Decision.

(6) Supports evaluation and comparison efforts.

d. **Updating Products.** Planning support products are linked together during wargaming to provide a greater understanding of the COA and to aid the commander in decision-making. Therefore, it is important to capture all updates that occurred during the war game.

4. **COA WARGAME RESULTS**

a. **Wargame Results.** COA Wargame results include the advantages and disadvantages of each COA and suggested modifications. It may also include refinements:

- (1) Synchronize warfighting functions/CMO Tasks
- (2) Refine task organization and command relationships
- (2) Develop Decision Support Template (DST)
- (3) CMO assets and shortfalls identified
- (4) Validate or refine CCIRs
- (5) Updated staff estimates and estimates of supportability, and supporting concepts (CMO)

b. **The Commander's Guidance and/or Direction**

- (1) Approved COAs for COA Comparison and Decision
- (2) Identify Branches and Sequels for Further Planning
 - (a) Branch. The contingency options built into the base plan used for changing the mission, orientation, or direction of movement of a force to aid success of the operation based on anticipated events, opportunities, or disruptions caused by adversary actions and reactions. (JP 1-02)
 - (b) Sequel. The subsequent major operation or phase based on the possible outcomes (success, stalemate, or defeat) of the current major operation or phase (JP 5-0). It should be noted that a sequel requires its own OPT.

(3) Comparison Criteria Guidance

c. **Refine Staff Estimates.** Update CMO staff estimate. The staff will use the wargame results to refine staff estimates, summarizing the civil impact on each COA in preparation for COA Comparison and Decision step with the Commander. The CMO working group will provide a recommendation to the commander from the civil prospective as to which COA best accomplishes the mission.

REFERENCES :

MCWP 5-1 Marine Corps Planning Process
MCWP 3-33.1 MAGTF Civil-Military Operations

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